

# Marketing in a Multimedia Era

A Senior Project

presented to

the Faculty of the Music Department

California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Bachelor of Arts in Music

by

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Every year thousands of prospective students apply to Cal Poly, many of whom wish to join the Music Department. Last year alone, close to fifty thousand students applied to Cal Poly; yet, only one hundred and forty of those fifty thousand applicants applied as music majors.<sup>1</sup> With an increase in overall enrollment to the university over the last five years, the Music Department is not attracting a significant portion of this huge influx of students. In the 2012 application period, .0029 % of total first time enrolled freshman entered Cal Poly as a music major.<sup>2</sup> In attempt to help increase future enrollment into the Music Department, I have used my knowledge as a Cal Poly music major to create practical and informative videos to help attract more students to apply to Cal Poly.

Although these videos can apply to a wide variety of students, I created these videos with admitted students in mind with the hope of persuading those who have not confirmed their admission status to the program. From my investigation into student enrollment, the biggest potential for increased enrollment comes from the group of students who decline their offer of admission to Cal Poly. Taking a look at the Music Department's enrollment statistics for the last five years (Fig.1), there were a total of one hundred and nineteen admitted students who declined their offer of admissions to the program in for the last five years. Whether through the targeting of admitted or prospective students, the potential benefits for the department are manifold. Through this project not only do I hope to better the Music Department by increasing enrollment but also hope to better the lives of prospective students by showing them why Cal Poly was the right choice for me and how it could be the right choice for them.

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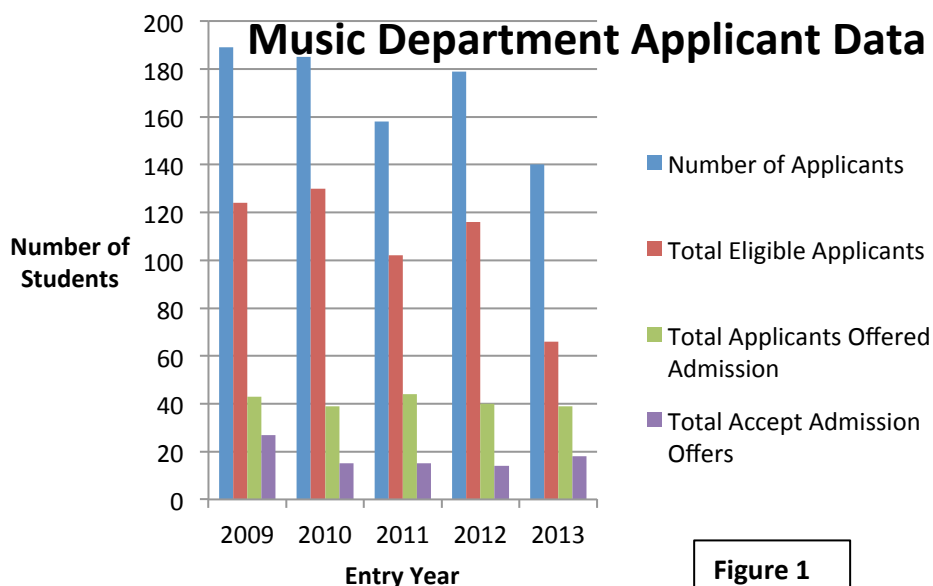
<sup>1</sup> Druci Reese, email message, May 6, 2013.

<sup>2</sup> A. Charles Crabb, Patricia Van Belleghem, and Michele Anderson, *Fact Book Fall 2012* (San Luis Obispo: Institutional Planning & Analysis, 2012), 6.

### Purpose:

In the last five years, the Cal Poly Music Department has seen a significant drop in prospective applicants from one hundred eighty nine in 2009 to only one hundred and forty in 2013 (Fig.1).<sup>3</sup> With an

average of one hundred and seventy students applying each year, the department has averaged an incoming class of only eighteen students per year for the last five years.<sup>4</sup> Whether this is

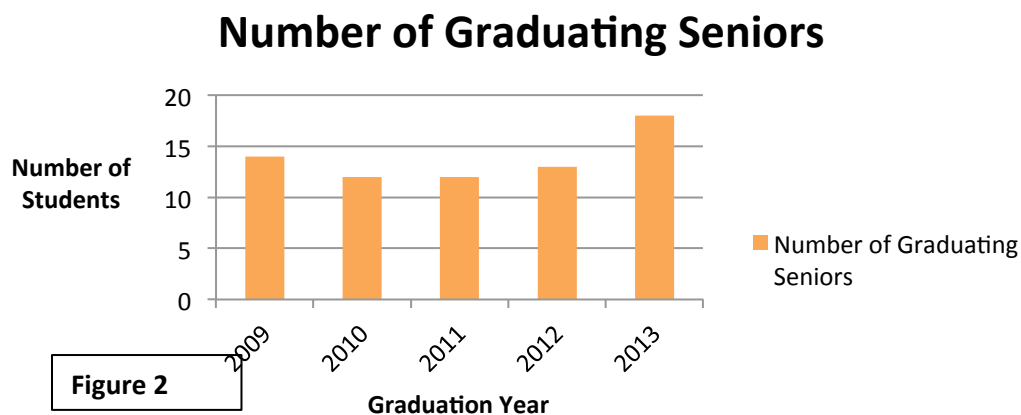


due to fewer students interested in pursuing degrees in music or more students applying to larger music programs or conservatories, it is quite apparent that despite the success of the department and its graduates that the program is being over shadowed by larger departments at Cal Poly. In turn, this is causing fewer students to apply to the program. To top things off, the department has also been losing more students every year due to increasing graduation rates (Fig. 2). On average for the last five years, for every eighteen newly admitted students into the department the department loses fourteen graduates. Such high graduation rates are commendable; however, with an average increase of only four new students per year, the department has witnessed a very

<sup>3</sup> Reese, May 6, 2013.

<sup>4</sup> Reese, May 6, 2013.

slow growth rate compared to the five year average growth rate of the university at five hundred thirty nine more students per year.<sup>5</sup>



As explained earlier, the purpose of this project was to create usable videos to help sway prospective students into applying to the program and to help convince accepted students to confirm their offer of admission. Taking a look at Figure 1 for the last five years, the Music Department has lost an average of twenty three admitted candidates per year. With such a large margin of students not accepting their offers of admission, there is a potential for increased enrollment through the use of these informative videos in marketing to these students.

Although a major part of this project is to help increase enrollment, it is also meant to help inform students on what to expect as Cal Poly music students; including available classes, performing groups, and even advice from current students. When I applied to Cal Poly, I knew little about the sorts of classes I would be taking, the faculty who would be teaching these courses, and the opportunities I would have after college as a Cal Poly music major. Due to a

<sup>5</sup> Crabb, Belleghem, and Anderson, *Fact Book Fall 2012*, 6-17.

lack of communication, it is possible that such small numbers of enrollment can be credited to the lack of communication between the department and its prospective students.

For this project, not only did I want to find a creative way to relay information about the program, but also wanted to associate faces with the department. However, faces on a screen can only go so far when attempting to capture someone's attention. The key to this project was creating videos that are not only informative but also engage their audience. In essence, I sought to capture life of the department in hopes of exciting students about coming to Cal Poly. The Cal Poly's Music Department is more than just a degree it is an experience, more specifically this project is my experience as a Cal Poly music major that I want to share.

### **Target Audience**

This project is meant to target both prospective and admitted students. Each video can be posted to the department website, uploaded to Facebook or YouTube, emailed to students, or even provided as physical copies for students interested in the program. These videos were also created to be broadly applicable, to be distinguished without concern for any applicant's particular interest. Because of this broad appeal, these videos leave a wide marketing potential for the department. To conclude, it is hard to label which type of students these videos would best serve; however, to help maintain this project's relevance, the department should constantly look at future enrollment trends and adapt these videos to better serve its enrollment goals.

### **Overview of Videos**

As discussed earlier, my project consists of a series of videos that are meant to be used by the Music Department as a part of its marketing toward prospective. More specifically the project consists of four videos which represent the different aspects that make up the music

department: students, faculty, performance, and courses. The first video consists of an interview with Dr. Spiller, head of the department. This video is meant to welcome students to the department as well as introduce prospective students to what the Music Department has to offer future students. The video is also meant to provide interested student with an overview of what it means to be a music major including classes offered, performance opportunities, learn by doing's influence on the department, and also what makes Cal Poly a great choice for them.

Following Dr. Spiller's video is a video dedicated to current student's perspective. For this section of the project I interviewed graduating seniors Lauren Castro, Kevin Capacia, and Milly Barizo about their experience as a Cal Poly Music Major. The purpose of this video is to show an inside perspective from current students in the department. In essence, what does it mean to be a music major and what has this program done for students in return. In the interview I ask students about various job opportunities that they have been offered because of the department, specific areas of music these students focus on such as composition and ethnomusicology, why Cal Poly, and also any advice for prospective or incoming students.

The third video of the series includes a video dedicated to the faculty of the department. Similar to the student video, I interviewed three department professors about the department. For this section I chose Dr. Meredith Brammeier, Dr. Antonio Barata, and Dr. Alyson McLamore to represent the three different course areas of the department: theory/musicianship, music technology, and musicology/music education. Being the longest video of the total project, this section consists of the nuts and bolts on what classes are offered in the department and what students will do in these classes. The video also focuses on how "learn by doing" applies to these courses; as well as, why any student should attend this program. The final section of my project consists of an interview with Professor Christopher Woodruff on the various performing groups

the department has to offer. In this section Professor Woodruff discusses different performance opportunities offered to music majors or non majors interested in participating in various performing groups. The video also discusses how to audition for groups, advice to students, and concludes with a live performance from the Cal Poly Brass ensemble.

### **Production**

Production of these videos consisted of three phases of completion categorized by preproduction, production, and post production. In the preproduction period, I worked in collaboration with my program adviser Dr. Antonio Barata to formulate a game plan for the project. With Dr. Barata's guidance, I worked on planning and organizing in preparation for filming, scheduling and creating timelines of completion, and most importantly creating interview questions for the videos.

For each video, I would interview faculty and students on their specific area of focus in the department. Interview questions for each video derived from my research into the most commonly asked questions sent by prospective students and what I believed prospective students wanted to know about the program. Examples of questions included: "How does the Music Department adhere to the Cal Poly tradition of Learn by Doing? How does the program prepare students for life after graduation? What are current alumni doing after they graduation? How has the department helped students succeed throughout their time at Cal Poly? And why Cal Poly?" When creating these questions, one of my biggest concerns was convenience for the department and for students. Convenience in the ability to put online the most prominent questions asked by those interested in the program so that these students could answer their questions themselves. During the application period, and even more so towards the end, applicants have thousands of

questions they want to ask; yet, the department has a very limited amount of personnel to answer such questions. By addressing these issues, students will now be able to get the information they need and by doing so save the department much valuable time that can be reinvested into the department.

Along with creating interview question, another major portion of the preproduction period consisted of picking students and faculty to interview. For my project I picked interviewee's based on the purpose of each video. In video one, I chose Dr. Spiller because I wanted this video to represent the department in welcoming prospective and admitted students to Cal Poly. For the faculty section I chose each professor based on their area of study. With so many outstanding educators in the department, this was a difficult choice. In the end, I decided on the three faculty members who I felt could not only best represent their specific area of focus but all courses interrelated with their area of specialty. As for students, I chose students based on their various areas of interest. For example I chose Mr. Capacia for his interest in composing, Ms. Barizo for her love of art managements, and Ms. Castro for her passion for ethnomusicology. As a consequence of such meticulous casting, these videos can be applicable to a more diverse audience and in turn address all the various interests of a prospective student.

Phase two of production was categorized by the filming and interviewing of faculty and students of the music department. Although a lot of time was spent in each interview, the main concern and focus of this phase was the use of equipment to capture each video. Each filming consisted of a wide variety of equipment used and although the standard set up consisted of the department's high definition camera, the department's Zoom H4N audio recorder, and my personal Bose AE2 head phones, I would occasionally experiment with other equipment in attempt to research and discover the best combination of equipment. When deciding on what



equipment to use my two concerns were fidelity and portability. When filming, there is a lot of equipment used and it is very common to have around five to six people managing equipment if not more; however, for this project I only had myself which made finding a balance between these two concerns even more important.

For cameras, I primarily used the department's HD camera and although I occasionally used a few borrowed from Cal Poly Media services, camera choice had little impact on the success of each filming. When deciding which type of video camera to use, the only important factor I considered was picture quality. With that said, I did notice a significant difference in camera fidelity between the department's and those borrowed. When filming I used the department's camera for individual interviews and the borrowed cameras for b-roll footage (footage that inter cuts the main interviews throughout each video). Throughout the project it's quite apparent that at times the interviewee footage looks better than the b-roll. After completing this project I can conclude that the department's camera has a better picture quality than those borrowed and for those interested in similar projects or considering expanding upon this project I would recommend the department's camera over any other.

As for audio, I used the department's Zoom H4N. The H4N is an audio recording device that includes a high fidelity X/Y stereo microphone, digital preamp, two XLR/TRS combo inputs with phantom capability, and is also battery powered for easy portability. The H4N also captures audio to SD or SDHC cards with up thirty gigabytes of memory and includes a USB port for easy and quick transfer to Mac or PC. It even comes equipped with a wind screen. The reason I chose the H4N in the first place is that I wanted higher quality audio than what I would get from the standard microphone equipped on the camera. Although there are various ways to go about

recording such high quality audio, the H4N does so in not only one of the most convenient but simplest ways possible.

What I liked about this recording device was the ability to record high fidelity audio without the drawback of cumbersome equipment. Like all great recording engineers, I wanted to be able to record the highest quality audio as to greatly reduce post production audio editing. With this device, not only did I have the ability to record professional quality audio, but it also included editing features to help reduce time spent in post production. Some of these features include clipping prevention, reverb, and even specific settings to accommodate different room acoustics. Even more important than audio quality was the convenience and user friendliness of the device. In any major filming, there is always someone in charge of audio. However with this device, not only could I just set the microphone on a mic stand and let it be, but I also could just hit record and focus on other aspects of each filming that in turn gave me the freedom to conduct each interview without an audio technician.

Although I mainly used this device for interviews, I did use it in one instance to record the Cal Poly Brass ensemble. What was great about this device is that by adding two additional microphones I could create the perfect four channel recording. For this set up, I used two SM 81 condenser microphones in an X/Y formation. For a condenser mic to work, it requires phantom power to power the microphone. For a traditional recording session this would be no issue because the mic would receive power from some external audio source, such as a mixing board. However, if portability is an important concern this is out of the question which makes the H4N the solution. Because of this device, I was also able to go into the filming and capture the recording all to the H4N saving me the hassle of using a mixing board.

With all of its perks and usage, there were a few downsides to in using the H4N, the first being battery life. If used for basic recording of an interview or performance, this device can last hours on a set of batteries; however, when it comes to four channel recording or phantom power battery life is limited. Another issue was memory. When using a memory card, depending on the amount of recording and the size of the card, file space can be a very big issue. This issue came up a lot in my project and if you don't have an extra memory card on hand there are a few options you are left with other than recording over previous recordings. The last cause for concern I had with this device was its use in windy settings. Although it was it equipment with a wind screen, the device did not do as well as I hoped in very windy environments. For these types of situations, a lapel microphone would have best served my needs; however, this may have been more user than device error. Overall, these issues were minor inconveniences, and I would recommend this device to anyone for portable audio recording.

As for the last part of overall production, phase three can be described as the editing and finalizing of both film and audio. To do this, I consolidated all the data into one program for easy editing accessibility. For this, I used iMovie 11 as the software of choice for creating my project. Although there is a wide variety of editing software on the market, iMovie is a great user friendly program that can produce high quality products. Another benefit in using iMovie is that it is free on Mac computers. It also has the ability to easily integrate with other Apple products such as GarageBand. However, the downside of using iMovie is that one is limited in the amount of control and editing features compared to other programs like Adobe Premier or Apple's After Effects; however, for short films or music performances, one can take advantage of not to take advantage of the benefits in using this program.

Because of the goal of the project in limiting the amount of post production editing of audio and footage, the main usage of iMovie was to match audio and video. Since I recorded to an external device, during post production I had to match up the audio from the H4N with each video. In general this process is fairly easy, but at the same time very time consuming. For each filming I would clap before each interview to mark a point of unison for both the camera's audio and the H4N. Although recording to an external device is a great way of capturing high quality audio for videos, it is only possible if you have video editing software that allows for audio manipulation. One of the first issues I encountered was that the version of iMovie I was using didn't allow the freedom of audio editing. After a little bit of research and updating to the current version of the program, I was given the freedom to manipulate audio placement which in turn allowed me to match up my audio and video files.

Another great feature of the newest version of iMovie is the audio effects it offers users. Because of the high quality recordings imported into the program, I was able to get away with using iMovie's audio editing features without having to use an external DAW like ProTools. That being said, I did occasionally use GarageBand for audio that iMovie couldn't quite handle. For example, all the music used, was edited in GarageBand to compress and edit each file to best serve its video. I know it is a sin to compress classical music, but because of the huge dynamic ranges of some of the music used I was having a hard time with balance between those speaking and background audio. After editing, I was then able to easily export the audio file to iMovie.

GarageBand was also great for creating loops of recording which is unavailable in iMovie. One instance of this was the recording of the Cal Poly Brass Ensemble. Although one of the main reasons in using GarageBand was to mix together the recording (which can't be done in iMovie), I also needed to find a way to loop the tracks because midway through the recording the

Tuba player's value jumped out of place which brought the performance to a stop. By looping the track I was able to cut out this error leaving listeners with no idea that such a huge issue never existed. Overall, I was extremely happy with my choice in editing software; iMovie and GarageBand get a bad rap as editing software, however, from my experience and research accumulated from this project, these programs can in fact produce the same if not better quality products as any other program.

To conclude, overall production of this project took nine months and hundreds of hours to complete. From pre production to post production, a lot went into creating these videos and as consequence this project has a lot to offer both prospective students and the music department. This project stands for the culmination of my work as a Cal Poly student and although it represents the end of my time as a Cal Poly music major, it marks the being of the future for countless students to come.

### **Project Use**

Although production was a huge factor of this project, the way this project is used is equally important. This project was created with two uses in mind: web presence and physical copies. For physical distribution, the DVD has been burned into a useable copy for the Music Department to distribute as they desire. Although I wouldn't recommend that the department mail the videos out, these DVD would be perfect to pass out at open house, auditions, or any other function at the music department. With that said, social media would be my preferred medium for distribution to students. As a former employee of the university, social media marketing has been a huge factor for the high numbers of applicants. Although this project will be used as physical DVD's, I would recommend that the internet be their main focus.

To do this, the best and easiest ways would be through YouTube. From there, the department has the flexibility and freedom to do what they want with each video. Some recommendations I would make is to first link the videos to the department website. For example, for Dr. Spiller's and the other faculty videos, add links to the department's website offering prospective students the opportunity to see a message from the Cal Poly faculty. As for the student interviews, put a link under the home page directing students to see a message from some current students. Along with YouTube, Facebook is a great way of targeting students by posting the links on the department's page to direct students to YouTube. Although it seems like the most effective ways to share these videos is to link students from other sites to YouTube, YouTube by its self is another great way to market towards students.

However, these delivery formats only serve as permanent housing for the project and is only effective if students look at these videos if they happen to be visiting the source of which contains each video. If the department is looking to reach out to students, the best way to delivery this project is through email. Cal Poly is one of the first universities to use video messages through email as a way to communicate with prospective students. By sending emails, the department can use its enrollment data to specifically target certain groups of students. As mentioned earlier, admitted students who decline their offer of admission stand as a major concern for increased in enrollment. To reach out to these students, all the department would need to do is create the template for their message and add a link to the video they want to direct students to. Through social media, the department now has the ability to market to these students which was unavailable in the past.

Whatever medium the department chooses to deliver these videos through, there are few factors to take into consideration. One factor in particular is to be wary of uploading the video

directly to emails. With the increase of spam protection, many email servers will recognize these emails as spam and unless the students happens to check their spam folder on a daily basis the message could be as good as lost. Also any videos used on any of the universities website or any DVD's representing the department must be compliant with the American Disabilities Act. The ADA, is an act from the 1990's that "prohibits discrimination and ensure equal opportunities for persons with disabilities in employment, State and local government services, public accommodations, commercial facilities, and transportation."<sup>6</sup> What this means is that each video must contain close captioning for the hearing disabled. However, this is just a minor inconvenience with a variety of different services offered on campus to help get these videos into compliance. Even YouTube offers their own close captioning software that automatically creates captions for videos; however, this is sometimes unreliable. YouTube does offer ways to manually transcribe each video uploaded and it would be my recommendation to have each video manually transcribed.

### **Conclusion:**

In attempt to help increase enrollment into the Cal Poly Music Department, I have demonstrated my knowledge as a Cal Poly music major to create a practical project to provide informative information through useable videos to attract and convince more prospective students into coming to Cal Poly. With thousands of applicants applying in the last five years and thousands more applying each year, the department now has a chance to jump on board this large influx of students. Although creating videos was a major part of this project, the continuation of relevance of this project toward future students is half the battle. As my time at Cal Poly comes

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<sup>6</sup> United State Department of Justice Civil Rights Division, "Information and Technical Assistance on the American with Disabilities Act," *ADA*, <[http://www.ada.gov/2010\\_regs.htm](http://www.ada.gov/2010_regs.htm)> (June 8, 2013).

to a close, this project needs to be picked up by the department and fellow students if these videos truly have any chance of making an impact. Through this paper I have explained the projects purpose, how the videos were filmed, and how to use them; however, it is up to my fellow music department colleagues to pick this project up and continue to build upon the ground work for which I have provided. Four years ago I entered Cal Poly as a music major not knowing what to expect. Now as I leave, this project is my way of thanking the department for all it and the university has done for me. Although as students we come to Cal Poly for a degree, we leave with an experience, and through my experience I hope to share this journey with future students interested in the program.



## Videos

To view the videos from this senior project see the follow links.

Department Welcome:

<http://youtu.be/xS6jEV0smw0>

Student Perspective:

<http://youtu.be/Y8z0MtMP3IY>

Teacher Perspective:

<http://youtu.be/KrJQ2aGH3qI>

Performing Groups:

<http://youtu.be/zs7LflRBqCk>

Work Cited

Reese, Druci. email message, May 6, 2013.

Crabb, Charles A, Patricia Van Belleghem, and Michele Anderson. *Fact Book Fall 2012*. San Luis Obispo: Institutional Planning & Analysis, 2012.

United State Department of Justice Civil Rights Division. "Information and Technical Assistance on the American with Disabilities Act." *ADA*, <[http://www.ada.gov/2010\\_regs.htm](http://www.ada.gov/2010_regs.htm)> (June 8, 2013).